

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02
SAJ-01 /061 W
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R 281544Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0640
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMCONSUL ZAGREB
CINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENNA 0706

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, YU, AU
SUBJECT: SLOVENE MINORITY CONTROVERSY: MOST RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

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REF: A) VIENNA '76 9485, B) VIENNA '76, 5712

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: IMPASSE OVER SLOVENE MINORITY CONTROVERSY
CONTINUES BUT LEVEL OF PARTISAN POLEMICS HAS ALREADY DECLINED
AND GOA HAS TAKEN NUMBER OF MINOR STEPS IN RECENT WEEKS TO EASE
AUSTRO-YUGOSLAV TENSIONS OVER ISSUE. IN WAKE OF LIMITED VALUE
OF STATISTICS FROM NOVEMBER 1976 LANGUAGE CENSUS, GOA NOW
CONSIDRING STATISTICAL PLOY WHICH WOULD PROVIDE FOR "GENEROUS
ARRANGEMENT" RE BILINGUAL ROAD SIGNS. SLOVENE MINORITY
LEADERSHIP, IN CHANGE OF TACTICS, NOW INDICATES ROAD SIGN
ISSUE NOT PRESSING AND PREFERS ATTENTION BE GIVEN
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INSTEAD TO MORE USE OF SLOVENE IN SCHOOLS, COURTS,
AND MEDIA. SAME LEADERSHIP APPEARS NONCOMMITTAL ON
STAFFING ADVISORY COUNCILS PROVIDED FOR BY PROMOTION
OF MINORITIES BILL, EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 1, BUT IS
PRESSING FOR REESTABLISHMENT OF HIGH-LEVEL CONTACT
COMMITTEE. LATEST TACTICAL MANEUVERING OF ALL PARTIES
TO CONTROVERSY IS TAKING PLACE AGAINST BACKGROUND OF

UPCOMING BELGRADE '77 MEETING, WITH ITS IMPLICATIONS ALSO FOR HUMAN RIGHTS OF MINORITIES, AND RECENT ARREST AND RELEASE OF SLOVENE LEADER FOR ALLEGED CONSPIRACY IN ABORTED BOMB PLOT IN CARINTHIA. NEXT INDICATION OF DIRECTION CONTROVERSY LIKELY TO TAKE WILL BE JANUARY 31 VIENNA MEETING BETWEEN CHANCELLOR AND LEADERS OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN PARLIAMENT AND SLOVENE MINORITY. END SUMMARY.

2. SINCE INCONCLUSIVE LANGUAGE CENSUS LAST NOVEMBER, RESULTS OF WHICH ALL PARTIES TO CONTROVERSY CLAIMED WAS VICTORY FOR THEIR RESPECTIVE CAUSES, GOA HAS TAKEN NUMBER OF MINOR STEPS TO EASE TENSION OVER ISSUE. AMONG OTHER THINGS, FOREIGN MINISTER PAHR RECENTLY REAFFIRMED GOA'S COMMITMENT TO FULFILL COMPLETELY TERMS OF ARTICLE 7 OF STATE TREATY AND STATED THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN AUSTRIA AND YUGOSLAVIA WERE, WITH EXCLUSION OF ARTICLE 7 CONTROVERSY, GENERALLY GOOD AND CONTINUE TO IMPROVE. IN ACCORD THEREWITH, GOA HAS SOUGHT TO RE-ENGAGE GOY IN NUMBER OF ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS AND EXCHANGE OF VISITS. DOMESTICALLY, CHANCELLOR RECENTLY MET WITH LEADERS OF THREE PARTIES IN PARLIAMENT AND PARTY AND GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIPS FROM CARINTHIA TO DISCUSS NEXT STEPS TO BE TAKEN IN CONNECTION CONTROVERSY. INITIAL PUBLIC COMMENTARIES BY RANKING PARTICIPANTS IN MEETING WERE CONCILIATORY AND INCLUDED AFFIRMATION OF NEED FOR GENEROUS ARRANGEMENT WITH REGARD TO BILINGUAL ROAD SIGNS, ONE

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OF MAJOR ITEMS OF CONTROVERSY. ALSO NOTED AS OFFERING POSSIBILITY FOR FRESH START ON DEALING WITH CONTROVERSY WAS ANNOUNCEMENT AT END OF 1976 THAT AUSTRIA AND YUGOSLAVIA WOULD EXCHANGE NEW AMBASADORS IN EARLY 1977.

3. ACCORDING TO UNOFFICIAL RETURNS, LANGUAGE CENSUS IN CARINTHIA, WHICH WAS EFFECTIVELY BOYCOTTED BY SLOVENE MINORITY, SHOWS ONLY FOUR COMMUNITIES HAVING MORE THAN 25 PERCENT SLOVENE-SPEAKING POPULATION, FIGURE NECESSARY FOR ERECTION OF BILINGUAL ROAD SIGNS. OFFICIAL RESULTS, NOT EXPECTED UNTIL SPRING, ARE UNLIKELY TO CHANGE THIS PICTURE. THERE HAS BEEN SOME DISCUSSION IN GOA AS TO POSSIBILITY OF ARRIVING AT SLOVENE-SPEAKING POPULATION BY SUBTRACTING GERMAN-SPEAKING POPULATION, WITH NEAR 100 PERCENT TURNOUT IN CENSUS, FROM TOTAL POPULATION.

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD

UNDER SUCH COMPUTATION, BILINGUAL ROAD SIGNS COULD BE JUSTIFIED IN 13-15 COMMUNITIES. SLOVENE MINORITY LEADERSHIP HAS NOW SHIFTED ITS TACTICAL STANCE, INDICATING THAT ROAD SIGN ISSUE IS NOT PRESSING ONE; OF GREATER CONCERN IS EXPANDING USE OF LANGUAGE IN SCHOOLS, COURTS, AND MEDIA.

4. ON FEBRUARY 1, PROMOTION OF MINORITIES BILL (REFTEL B), WHICH PROVIDES FOR GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AND FUNDING FOR MINORITIES, ENTERS INTO EFFECT. IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF BILL IS PROVISION FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF MIXED (MEMBERSHIP OF WHICH HALF EACH APPOINTED BY GOVERNMENT AND MINORITIES) ADVISORY COUNCILS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES. WHILE SLOVENE MINORITY LEADERSHIP HAS NOT GIVEN EMPHATIC NO
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TO SELECTING REPRESENTATIVES TO ADVISORY COUNCIL,

INDICATIONS ARE THAT SLOVENE MINORITY LEADERS ARE SKEPTICAL OF EFFICACY OF SUCH BODIES AND FEEL THAT BY THEIR CONTROL OVER FUNDS AND ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT POWER, THEY COULD IN TIME UNDERMINE POLITICAL VIABILITY OF EXISTING TWO MAJOR SLOVENE MINORITY ORGANIZATIONS. EVOLVING TACTICAL APPROACH OF SLOVENE MINORITY LEADERS THEREFORE SEEMS TO BE TO KEEP OPTION OPEN ON TAKING PART IN ADVISORY COUNCILS WHILE PRESSING AT SAME TIME FOR REESTABLISHMENT OF HIGH-LEVEL CONTACT COMMITTEE, INCLUDING LEADERS OF THREE PARLIAMENTARY PARTIES. PURPOSE OF COMMITTEE IN VIEW OF SLOVENE LEADERS WOULD BE TO PROVIDE DOWNWARD PRESSURE ON PARTY AND GOVERNMENTAL BUREAUCRACIES IN CARINTHIA TO TURN GOA COMMITMENTS IN PRINCIPLE INTO LOCAL POLICY IN SPECIFIC CASES.

5. SLOVENE MINORITY LEADERSHIP HAS QUIETLY PUT GOA ON NOTICE THAT IT FEELS HELSINKI ACCORD ALSO APPLIES TO HUMAN RIGHTS FOR MINORITIES. IN THIS CONTEXT, COMMENTS BY GOA OF "GENEROUS ARRANGEMENTS" AND SINCERE DESIRE TO FULFILL COMPLETELY ARTICLE 7 SEEMS IN PART AIMED AT DISCOURAGING SLOVENE MINORITY LEADERSHIP FROM HAVING CONTROVERSY RAISED AT BELGRADE MEETING. THUS IT APPEARS LIKELY THAT MINORITY WILL ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN SOME REAL CONCESSIONS FROM GOA BEFORE BELGRADE MEETING.

6. COMPLICATING PROBLEM OF DEALING WITH CONTROVERSY DOMESTICALLY WAS INVESTIGATORY ARREST JANUARY 22 OF SLOVENE MINORITY LEADER FILIP WARASCH IN CRINTHIA ON SUSPICION OF INCITING ANOTHER SLOVENE-SPEAKING AUSTRIAN TO DISRUPT LAST NOVEMBER'S LANGUAGE CENSUS BY BOMBING ATTACK. INDIVIDUAL IN QUESTION WHO SAID HE HAD RECEIVED EXPLOSIVES AND INSTRUCTIONS FROM WARASCH BUT HAD NOT CARRIED OUT BOMBING, DENOUNCED WARASCH TO AUTHORITIES IN MID-JANUARY, ALMOST TWO CONFIDENTIAL

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MONTHS AFTER PLANNED BOMBING. OTHER PUZZLING DETAILS OF CASE, INCLUDING DECISION TO MAKE PUBLIC THE KNOWLEDGE OF CASE ON SAME DAY AS CONCILIATORY STATEMENTS FROM VIENNA MEETING OF THREE POLITICAL PARTIES ON SLOVENE MINORITY CONTROVERSY, HAVE GIVEN RISE TO SPECULATION OF POSSIBLE RIGHT-WING, NATIONALIST PROVOCATION. WARASCH WAS RELEASED JANUARY 27. INVESTIGATION OF CASE REPORTEDLY CONTINUES AND IT IS NOT KNOWN WHETHER INDICTMENT WILL BE MADE. UNFORTUNATELY, MEDIA TREATMENT OF WARASCH CASE HAS TENDED TO GENERATE CONFRONTATIONAL STATEMENTS AND EXPRESSIONS OF MUTUAL SUSPICION AND CONCERN.

7. NEXT INDICATION ON WHICH WAY MINORITY CONTROVERSY
IS LIKELY TO GO WILL BE JANUARY 31 MEETING BETWEEN
REPRESENTATIVES OF GOA AND POLITICAL PARTIES AND
SLOVENE MINORITY LEADERS. BUCHANAN

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